Reviewer's report

Title: Survival in patients with stage IV noncardia gastric cancer - the influence of DNA ploidy and Helicobacter Pylori infection.

Version: 1 Date: 20 March 2012

Reviewer: Daniele Marrelli

Reviewer's report:

In the present retrospective study, the Authors reviewed the records of 218 patients with stage IV gastric cancer treated by palliative surgery followed by postoperative chemotherapy, with the aim to identify potential prognostic variables. The study is a further analysis of a previously published series (Ref. 5), after adding non-conventional prognostic variables as tumour DNA index and serum IgG anti-HP antibodies.

Statistical analysis identified performance status, liver metastases and DNA Index as independent predictors of poor prognosis.

Comments:

The manuscript is well written. Methods are clearly described. Statistical analysis is adequate. Results may be important in order to potentially select patient eligible for palliative gastrectomy and chemotherapy.

I have some minor essential revisions:

Table 1:

1) Does “Abdominal metastases” means peritoneal dissemination?
2) Albumin no/yes: please specify

Figures and text:

3) In figures months are usually used as time interval on x-axis instead of weeks. Similarly for the text of manuscript.

Table 2:

4) MST measure should be specified (please use months)

Discussion:

5) The survival benefit of palliative gastrectomy in advanced gastric cancer is not well established. A randomized trial (Japan/Korea, KGCA01/JCOG0705) is ongoing and results are awaited.

6) Of the three identified prognostic factors, liver metastases and PS can be assessed prior to surgery. Could DNA index be assessed in preoperative biopsy in order to preoperatively select patients eligible for palliative gastrectomy? This important point should be discussed by the Authors.
References:
7) ref. 5: please add year
8) please check abbreviated journal name throughout references

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests' below